


November 3, 1994

MEMORANDUM

TO: Administrators, Renal Dialysis Facilities

FROM: 
Alan Samuels, Director
Division of Health Licensing

SUBJECT: Screening of Patients and Staff for Hepatitis B Antibodies.

An application for exception to Section 409.D.1.a(2) of Regulation 61-97, Standards for Licensing Renal Dialysis Facilities, the current standard for screening patients and staff pertaining to Hepatitis B antibodies (HBsAb), has been approved. In consultation with Dr. Robert T. Ball, Jr., Communicable Disease/HIV Consultant, DHEC, the following procedures are effective immediately:

1. Because dialysis patients are not offered routine vaccination for Hepatitis B, and in light of their being screened monthly for the Hepatitis B surface antigen (HBsAg), there is no need for the semi-annual HBsAb screening. The monthly HBsAg screening process will detect patients infected with Hepatitis B much earlier than the semi-annual HBsAb test.
2. The staff in ESRD facilities are receiving HBsAg screening on a semi-annual basis. If staff personnel were to become infectious between the HBsAg screenings they would not pose a health risk to the patients because they are not doing Exposure Prone Invasive procedures, by Center for Disease Control standards. Therefore they will not need the semi-annual HBsAb screening.
3. It is important to note that if patients or staff are offered the vaccination, there must be an HBsAb screening prior to the administration of this vaccine.

If there are any questions please call this office, 737-7202.

AS:RAL:gm